

1.913 Extension Service
 13116 U. S. Dept. of Agr.

ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL FOR A DEMONSTRATION ON THE MANAGEMENT OF TIME

By Jean Warren
 Extension Specialist in Home Management
 Berkeley, California

December 3, 1943

The block system which I have used for demonstrations on management of time is a bit hard to describe, but I will do my best. The demonstration equipment consists of 15 blocks which represent hours, 12 blocks one-half that size to represent half hours, and 12 blocks one-quarter that size to represent quarter hours. Half of these blocks are painted a light color and half a dark color. This gives a variation in the piles so that they are easier to see regardless of the background of the room and the dress that the demonstrator has on. We have tried one color of block for each activity but find it too confusing for the demonstrator.

At the beginning of the demonstration the blocks are piled to represent the way the average homemaker spends her time. These are estimated figures for California based on the 1925-30 time-management study. Most States have similar figures. In front of these piles of blocks we have cardboard signs telling what each pile represents. The signs say House, Work, Sleep, Self, and Other.

The next step is to ask someone in the meeting to describe what she did on the preceding day and rearrange the blocks to fit her time pattern. This brings out the points that no woman is like the average and that use of time has changed during the war. In rearranging the piles to represent an actual woman's day, we have found that it sometimes is useful to have one or two signs in reserve, one reading War and representing activities which have to do with the war such as folding surgical dressings, helping at the USO, acting as a nurses' aide, etc. The other sign which we have had sometimes is Farm, so we could distinguish between housework, farm work, and other types of work.

To get the homemaker to tell how she used her time the preceding day, we started with what time she got up and what time she went to bed. This tells the numbers of hours to assign to sleep and rest. Sometimes there is more time to add during the day, but usually not. Next we ask what she did after getting up and try to have her recall the activities of the day. If she doesn't account for all her time we check to see how it might have been used, such as for baking, laundry, mending, writing letters, telephoning, etc. This is only a rough approximation, but it is accurate enough to get the group to thinking how they spent their time.

Usually we have arranged the blocks only twice, once for the average person and once for a person in the audience, and from there have proceeded to the discussion of use of time, stressing that if the homemaker wishes to improve her use of time she must first know what she is doing. We also point out that, if 5 hours are used for food preparation and 5 minutes for bed making, then cutting the time spent in bed making in half will not help very much, but taking 10 percent off of the time spent in food preparation will save half an hour.

This demonstration can be used briefly at any meeting. If our demonstration is on time management we usually have each woman record what she did with her time the preceding day and then consider ways of changing use of time to give greater family satisfactions. If the demonstration is on some other subject such as food preservation, we try to show how time can be "found" for this activity.

This brief demonstration with blocks has proved very helpful in getting women to visualize or to understand their time-management problems.

U.S. GOVERNMENT
PRINTING OFFICE